

December 16, 2015 - CLIMATE AND GUNS

Today's topics are climate and guns. two topics upon which left/liberals go absolutely bonkers. Few things better illustrate their urge to coerce and command. Why is it their solutions always increase the state's power?

We start with a post from [Watt's Up With That](#). Says the Paris confab has produced voluntary mush.

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Legally binding carbon dioxide emission targets were too contentious to pursue. So was modifying the concept of "differentiated responsibilities." It holds that countries that historically caused the recent atmospheric carbon dioxide build-up must lead in cutting their emissions, while helping developing countries eventually do likewise, by pouring trillions of dollars in cash and free technology into the Green Climate Fund for supposed climate change adaptation, mitigation and compensation. Developing countries had insisted on that massive wealth redistribution as their price for signing any binding document.

Although China now emits far more CO2 and other greenhouse gases (GHG) than the USA or EU, it refused to fast-track reducing those emissions. China and wealthy petro-states also opposed paying into the Climate Fund. Other major bones of contention were likewise never resolved. Thus, in the end, what we apparently got out of Paris is voluntary emission caps, voluntary progress reviews, no international oversight of any voluntary progress, and voluntary contributions to the Fund. ...

[David Harsanyi](#) writing for the Center for Individual Freedom says the climate talks reveal progressives true hypocrisy.

What do you call it when elites fly their private jets to an international climate change conference to forge a deal with despots that caps American prosperity without our consent? You call it progressivism.

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... On Wednesday, Obama alleged that without a climate change agreement, there could be "submerged countries, abandoned cities, fields that no longer grow" — assertions that are no more than fearmongering, ratcheted up over the decades by frustrated environmentalists and

now confidently thrown around by presidents. These prophecies are tethered to reality in the same way Donald Trump's whoppers are, although the media treat the former with undeserving respect.

Transforming ideology into a "science" is not a new development on the left. But the most useful indicators tell us that humanity's prospects are on the upswing. Poverty is declining; crops are producing higher yields; and humans are living longer and healthier lives despite the mild warming we've experienced. And in spite of these advancements (or maybe because of them), Western leaders are prepared, conveniently enough, to cap growth, spread wealth and centralize power in the way progressives have always wanted to cap growth, spread wealth and centralize power. ...

John Hinderaker says if you follow the money you'll learn what climate meeting was about.

Yesterday in Paris, Secretary of State John Kerry inadvertently said something true, admitting that the policies the Obama administration has pursued with the ostensible object of fending off global warming are worthless:

"The fact is that even if every American citizen biked to work, carpooled to school, used only solar panels to power their homes, if we each planted a dozen trees, if we somehow eliminated all of our domestic greenhouse gas emissions, guess what — that still wouldn't be enough to offset the carbon pollution coming from the rest of the world.

If all the industrial nations went down to zero emissions — remember what I just said, all the industrial nations went down to zero emissions — it wouldn't be enough, not when more than 65% of the world's carbon pollution comes from the developing world."

So what is global warming hysteria really all about? Money, mostly. The Paris conference is going into overtime, as we all knew it would, as the parties debate who is going to pay whom, and how much: ...

Craig Pirrong turns our attention to gun control.

The San Bernardino massacre unleashed an all-too-common phenomenon: literally (and I am using the word properly) before the bodies were even cold, politicians, pundits, and the hoi polloi (especially on Twitter) were using the atrocity to advance their own preferred narrative. The most common of these on the left was the gun control narrative. Hillary Clinton was one of the first off the mark to use San Bernardino to call for more stringent gun control measures. You know, before anyone—most notably one Hillary Rodham Clinton—knew anything about what had happened, beyond the fact that more than a dozen people had died. Obama was actually somewhat reserved, by his standards on this issue, and unexpectedly soft-pedaled his gun control message in his Oval Office speech on Sunday. But on the left the gun control drum was pounded for all it was worth, notably in a New York Times front page editorial.

Mass shootings like San Bernardino and Colorado Springs catalyze a flurry of calls for further restrictions on gun ownership, though these calls are frequently lacking in specifics, and are

often more like ritual acts and political signaling of right-thinking (or should I say left-thinking?) views than concrete proposals. Moreover, mass shootings also unleash a volley of bad and misleading statistics. So bad, in fact, that those using them are almost certainly doing so in bad faith.

This phenomenon is not limited to activists, or the left generally. Even allegedly reputable mainstream publications like The Economist also peddle agitprop. The MO is to claim that mass shootings occur almost daily in the US: when brought up in the context of a Newtown or Aurora, the clear intent is to suggest that these types of mass shootings are representative. But even a cursory look shows that this is definitely not the case. ...

More on guns as Kevin Williamson writes on "Irish Democracy."

It isn't even St. Patrick's Day, but we are all Irish now: In Connecticut, the boneheaded state government passed a law demanding the registration of certain firearms, and the people of Connecticut, perhaps communing for a moment with their independent-minded Yankee forebears, mainly refused to comply. On the other side of the country in the heart of California's technology corridor, the city of Sunnyvale demanded that residents hand over all firearms capable of accepting magazines holding more than ten rounds — effectively, everything except revolvers and some single-shot rifles — and the good men and women of Silicon Valley responded by turning in a grand total of zero firearms. Similar initiatives in other jurisdictions have produced similar results.

Political scientists call this "Irish democracy," the phenomenon by which the general members of a polity resist the mandates of their would-be rulers by simply refusing to comply with them. It is a low-cost form of civil disobedience, but one that can be very effective at times: Mohandas K. Gandhi was entirely correct in his famous declaration to the British powers that they would eventually be forced to simply pack up their tiffin pails and go home, because 300,000 Englishman could not control 300 million (at the time) Indians if those Indians didn't cooperate.

One way of considering the radical potential of simple noncompliance is the "10 percent synchronous subversion factor," the proposition that if 10 percent of the U.S. population refused to (for instance) pay taxes or answer jury-duty summonses, then the rules would have to change, because they would be unenforceable: There aren't enough tax agents, constables, slots on court dockets, or jail cells to enforce the rules against 32 million Americans if they should decide to refuse to comply with a given law. ...

The No Pasaran blog found its way into the NY Times with a rebuttal to the front-page editorial.

... It is easy to tout the success of gun control laws in the rest of the Western world and to say that "this just doesn't happen in other countries" when you ignore : the 1996 massacre of 16 children at a Scottish primary school; the 2000 killing of eight kids in Japan; the 2002 deaths of eight people in Nanterre, France; the 2002 killing of 16 kids in Erfurt, Germany; the 2007 shootings to death of eight people in Tuusula, Finland; the killing of 10 people at a Finnish university less than a year later; the 2009 killing of 15 people in Winnenden, Germany; and, needless to say, Anders Breivik's 2011 mass murder of 77 Norwegians, most of them teenagers.

Is it unrealistic to wonder whether the tolls would have been lesser had a few of the adults in each place — as well as in Paris's Bataclan a couple of weeks ago — carried a weapon and tried to shoot back at the respective killers? ...

Late Night from Andy Malcolm.

Fallon: Sting will perform at a fundraiser for Hillary Clinton this month. Hillary says she's been a huge Sting fan ever since he agreed to perform at her fundraiser.

Fallon: Mark Zuckerberg is taking two months' paternity leave now that his first child is born. That marks the first time anyone's had a baby and tried to avoid Facebook.

Watt's Up With That

The 'Binding' Paris treaty is now just voluntary mush

But Obama still wants to send US energy use and living standards backward

by Paul Driessen and Roger Bezdek

Paris climate talks this week descended into madcap all-night negotiations, as delegates desperately tried to salvage some kind of agreement beyond empty promises to do something sometime about what President Obama insists is the gravest threat to our planet, national security and future generations.

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Although China now emits far more CO₂ and other greenhouse gases (GHG) than the USA or EU, it refused to fast-track reducing those emissions. China and wealthy petro-states also opposed paying into the Climate Fund. Other major bones of contention were likewise never resolved. Thus, in the end, what we apparently got out of Paris is voluntary emission caps, voluntary progress reviews, no international oversight of any voluntary progress, and voluntary contributions to the Fund.

Of course, the entire climate cataclysm mantra is based on the claim that carbon dioxide has replaced the solar and other powerful natural forces that have driven climate change throughout

Earth and human history. Now, merely tweaking CO2 emissions will supposedly stabilize climate and weather systems.

President Obama fervently believes this delusion. He will likely use the voluntary Paris gobbledygook to say America somehow has a "moral obligation" to set an example, *by de-carbonizing, de-industrializing and de-developing the United States*. Thankfully, Congress and the states will have something to say about that, because they know these anti-fossil fuel programs will destroy jobs and living standards, especially for poor, working class and minority families.

The impacts would be far worse than many news stories and White House press releases suggest. Those sources often say the proposed climate treaty and other actions seek GHG reductions of 80% below predicted 2050 emission levels. The real original Paris treaty target is 80% below *actual 1990 levels*.

*That means the world would have to eliminate **96%** of the greenhouse gases that all humanity would likely release if we reach world population levels, economic growth and living standards predicted for 2050. The United States would likely have to slash its CO2 and GHG reductions to zero.*

Moreover, current 2050 forecasts already assume and incorporate significant energy efficiency, de-carbonization and de-industrialization over the next 35 years. They are not business-as-usual numbers or extrapolations of past trends. Further CO2 reductions beyond those already incorporated into the forecasts would thus be increasingly difficult, expensive, and indeed impossible to achieve.

As we explain in a [MasterResource.org analysis](#), there is a strong positive relationship between GDP and carbon-based energy consumption. Slashing fossil energy use that far would thus require decimating economic growth, job creation and preservation, and average per-person incomes. *In fact, average world per capita GDP would plummet from a projected \$30,600 in 2050 to a miserable \$1,200 per year.*

*Average per capita GDP in 2050 would be less than what Americans had **in 1830!*** Many futuristic technologies would still exist, but only wealthy families and ruling elites could afford them.

That would be catastrophic for jobs, health and welfare in developed countries – and lethal to millions in poor nations, who would be denied the blessings of electricity and fossil fuels for decades to come. That is indefensible, inhumane and immoral. And for what?

Mr. Obama and the alarmists in Paris insisted that drastic GHG reductions will hold global temperature increases to 2 degrees Celsius (3.5 F) and prevent climate and weather disasters. Now some even claim that the upper safety limit is actually 1.5 degrees C (2.7 F), which would require even more draconian energy and emission cutbacks. Otherwise, Earth could become uninhabitable, they assert. Nonsense.

EPA's own analyses suggest that its fully implemented Clean Power Plan would bring an undetectable, irrelevant reduction of perhaps 0.02 degrees Celsius (0.05 F) in average global temperatures 85 years from now – assuming carbon dioxide actually does drive climate change.

In the Real World, climate changes regularly, and recent climate and weather trends and events are in line with historic experience. In fact, average global temperatures haven't risen in nearly

two decades; no category 3-5 hurricane has struck the USA in a record ten years; Greenland and Antarctic ice are at record levels; and still firmly alkaline sea levels (8.1 pH) are rising at barely seven inches per century.

Many scientists believe the sun and other powerful natural forces may soon usher in a new era of colder temperatures, regardless of whether atmospheric CO₂ rises above 0.40% (400 ppm). That would pose much greater threats to human health, agriculture and prosperity (and wildlife) than global warming.

We must never forget: Fossil fuels facilitated successive industrial revolutions and enabled billions to live better than royalty did a century ago, helped average incomes to increase eleven-fold, and helped average global life expectancy to soar from less than 30 in 1870 to 71 today.

Carbon-based energy still provides 81% of world energy, and supports \$70 trillion per year in world GDP. It will supply 75-80% of global energy for decades to come, Energy Information Administration, International Energy Agency and other studies forecast. Carbon-based energy is essential if we are to bring electricity to the 1.3 billion people who still do not have it, and end the rampant poverty and lung, intestinal and other diseases that kill millions of people in poor countries every year.

Furthermore, thousands of coal-fired power plants are built, under construction or in planning around the world. China and India will not consider reducing GHG emissions until 2030, and even then it will be voluntary and dependent on how their economies are doing. That means atmospheric carbon dioxide levels will continue to climb, greening the planet and spurring faster crop, forest and grassland growth.

President Obama and the 40,000 climate alarmists gathered in Paris largely [ignored] these inconvenient realities, and whitewashed the adverse consequences of anti-hydrocarbon policies. Even binding targets would have had minimal or illusory health, climate and environmental benefits.

Instead, they would have horrendous *adverse effects* on human health and environmental quality, while doing nothing to prevent climate change or extreme weather events. What alarmists wanted in Paris would have let unelected, unaccountable activists and bureaucrats decide which industries, companies, workers, families, states and countries win the Climate Hustle game, and which ones lose.

And it's not just President Obama, who wants to slash America's carbon dioxide emissions by 26-28% below 2005 levels by 2025 – and 80% below 1990 levels by 2050! Every Democrat presidential candidate demands similar actions: Hillary Clinton wants one-third of all US electricity to come from wind and solar by 2027; Bernie Sanders wants 80% by 2050; Martin O'Malley wants 100% by 2050.

Obligating the United States to slash its fossil fuel use, and send billions of taxpayer dollars annually to dictators, bureaucrats and crony industrialists in poor countries would be disastrous. Thank goodness it did not happen. But we are not out of the woods yet.

Dr. Roger Bezdek is an internationally recognized energy analyst and president of Management Information Services, Inc., in Washington, DC. Paul Driessen is senior policy analyst for the Committee For A Constructive Tomorrow and author of Eco-Imperialism: Green power – Black death.

Center for Individual Freedom

Climate Talks Reveal Progressivism's True Hypocrisy

by David Harsanyi

What do you call it when elites fly their private jets to an international climate change conference to forge a deal with despots that caps American prosperity without our consent? You call it progressivism.

It's estimated that 50,000 carbon-spewing humans participated in the Paris climate conference. But while President Barack Obama was taking his working dinner at the three-Michelin-star L'Ambroisie, public protesters were banned from protesting in the aftermath of the Islamic terror attacks. Liberte? Not so much.

It took a handful of gunmen only one night to impede free expression in Paris. Yet according to the president, the 0.1 to 0.2 C of warming we might see over the next decade — the worst-case scenario predicted by global warming alarmists — is the biggest crisis facing mankind, worthy of a massive and expensive curbing effort.

That doesn't mean Obama won't use the issue of terrorism to refocus our attention where it belongs. Millions of people might live in fear and suffer under the genuine, deadly threat of radical Islam, but the president contends that the Paris conference itself is "a powerful rebuke to the terrorists" and an "act of defiance" in the face of extremism.

Why not? True believers are rarely dissuaded by reality. Socialist Francois Hollande, president of a country that not only was recently a target of Islamic terror but also witnessed the bloodiest conflict of the 20th century, claimed: "Never have the stakes been so high at an international conference. It's about the future of the planet, the future of life." Never?

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, a man whose divided nation still suffers unconscionable destitution and tyranny, told leaders that humankind has "never faced such a test" as climate change. Never?

These are preposterous exaggerations that have as much to do with history and science as the book of Revelation. But that's nothing new, is it? On Wednesday, Obama alleged that without a climate change agreement, there could be "submerged countries, abandoned cities, fields that no longer grow" — assertions that are no more than fearmongering, ratcheted up over the decades by frustrated environmentalists and now confidently thrown around by presidents. These prophecies are tethered to reality in the same way Donald Trump's whoppers are, although the media treat the former with undeserving respect.

Transforming ideology into a "science" is not a new development on the left. But the most useful indicators tell us that humanity's prospects are on the upswing. Poverty is declining; crops are producing higher yields; and humans are living longer and healthier lives despite the mild warming we've experienced. And in spite of these advancements (or maybe because of them), Western leaders are prepared, conveniently enough, to cap growth, spread wealth and centralize power in the way progressives have always wanted to cap growth, spread wealth and centralize power.

The world looks ready for a deal. Developing nations will receive reparations for the capitalist sins of advanced nations — about \$100 billion each year. Corporations will be subsidized so they can create more unproductive industries to meet arbitrary caps. And the worst carbon offenders in the world will have to do nothing. What's not to like?

If a deal can be reached, Obama will have to trust that Communist China — the world's most prodigious carbon emitter — will voluntarily implement economic restraints about 30 years from now, by which time the U.S. will have to reach a 26 to 28 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Obama will implement regulations to get that done unilaterally. So China will have more of a say in what happens to our environmental policy than Congress. But Obama will also negotiate with a number of other unsavory despots, such as the homicidal Robert Mugabe, who represents the African position at the Paris negotiations. He will not, however, bring the deal to Congress, which represents the majority of the American people.

The Paris agreement might be the biggest, most crucial international deal the world has ever known, but it is not important enough to be subjected to the traditional checks and balances of American governance. Global warming "does not pause for partisan gridlock," the president explained this summer. In other words, the president does not have to "pause" for Congress if he feels like using the regulatory state to implement his preferred partisan policy.

This kind of circumvention will be cheered by those who once feigned indignation when prior presidents abused executive power. This is really important, as you know. Obama hopes "to make climate change policy the signature environmental achievement of his, and perhaps any, presidency," said an approving *New York Times* editor. Progressives are perfectly content to surrender freedoms to fight global warming — perfectly content to give the executive branch unprecedented power to "act." And when the private jets come back and the pretend offsets are cashed in and the moralizing begins, you will know they did it for your own good.

Power Line

[On Global Warming, Follow the Money](#)

by John Hinderaker

Yesterday in Paris, Secretary of State John Kerry inadvertently [said something true](#), admitting that the policies the Obama administration has pursued with the ostensible object of fending off global warming are worthless:

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If all the industrial nations went down to zero emissions — remember what I just said, all the industrial nations went down to zero emissions — it wouldn't be enough, not when more than 65% of the world's carbon pollution comes from the developing world."

So what is global warming hysteria really all about? Money, mostly. The Paris conference is going into overtime, as we all knew it would, as the parties debate who is going to pay whom, and [how much](#):

Britain and other rich countries face demands for \$3.5 trillion (£2.3 trillion) in payments to developing nations to secure a deal in Paris to curb global warming.

Developing countries have added a clause to the latest draft of the text under which they would be paid the “full costs” of meeting plans to cut emissions. The amount paid by rich countries is a key unresolved issue at the climate conference in Paris, which is supposed to end tomorrow.

When trillions of dollars are at stake—or many billions, as in the case of “green” energy scams in the U.S.—you can pay for a lot of junk science.

STEVE adds: I was trolling the same news items as John, and came up with this:

As predicted here weeks ago, the Paris climate summit has degenerated into a full-scale shakedown. The main sticking point is the demand of developing countries that \$3.5 trillion in “climate adjustment assistance” be included in the final agreement as a *legally binding part of the agreement*. [Ron Bailey reports](#) this afternoon:

Poor country governments want rich country governments to make explicit promises about how much and when climate finance is going to be flowing their way. They don’t want to count loans, export credits, or private investments – climate finance has got to be public money and it’s got to be with no strings attached. As Indian climate negotiator Susheel Kumar explained earlier this week, climate finance is not a donation, it’s an entitlement. Poor countries deserve the money as reparations from rich countries that have wrecked the climate. As it happens, in the current draft of the universal climate accord, rich countries promise to “mobilize” \$100 billion annually as climate finance for poor countries by 2020. In fact, they also agree that \$100 billion is a floor and that poor countries can expect to get increasingly larger amounts between 2020 and 2030. But that is evidently not satisfactory.

Apparently this is too much even for John Kerry who has [threatened a U.S. walkout](#) if legally binding aid isn’t struck from the document. Kerry has tried to explain that any agreement with binding aid is dead on arrival in Congress back here in the U.S. I can’t believe anyone will take such a threat from Kerry seriously. Developing nations maybe poor, but they’re not stupid. They saw how Obama and Kerry folded to the Iranians. There is zero chance that Obama will want to be blamed for the failure of a “world-saving” climate agreement.

Prediction: Over the next few hours, some kind of “compromise” language will be found to paper over this very real problem. Kerry will probably promise that the World Bank, or the IMF, or the Tooth Fairy, will commit the money to developing nations, or that the money question will be the sole subject of next year’s climate conference. But India and China might hang tough, and again refuse to sign even a weak agreement as they did in Copenhagen in 2009, which would at least save Obama and Kerry the embarrassment of causing the collapse of the summit.

Streetwise Professor
Guns, Laws, and Money
by Craig Pirrong

The San Bernardino massacre unleashed an all-too-common phenomenon: literally (and I am using the word properly) before the bodies were even cold, politicians, pundits, and the hoi polloi (especially on Twitter) were using the atrocity to advance their own preferred narrative. The most common of these on the left was the gun control narrative. Hillary Clinton was one of the first off the mark to use San Bernardino to call for more stringent gun control measures. You know, before anyone—most notably one Hillary Rodham Clinton—knew anything about what had happened, beyond the fact that more than a dozen people had died. Obama was actually somewhat reserved, by his standards on this issue, and unexpectedly soft-pedaled his gun control message in his Oval Office speech on Sunday. But on the left the gun control drum was pounded for all it was worth, notably in a New York Times front page editorial.

Mass shootings like San Bernardino and Colorado Springs catalyze a flurry of calls for further restrictions on gun ownership, though these calls are frequently lacking in specifics, and are often more like ritual acts and political signaling of right-thinking (or should I say left-thinking?) views than concrete proposals. Moreover, mass shootings also unleash a volley of bad and misleading statistics. So bad, in fact, that those using them are almost certainly doing so in bad faith.

This phenomenon is not limited to activists, or the left generally. Even allegedly reputable mainstream publications like [*The Economist*](#) also peddle agitprop. The MO is to claim that mass shootings occur almost daily in the US: when brought up in the context of a Newtown or Aurora, the clear intent is to suggest that these types of mass shootings are representative. But even a cursory look shows that this is definitely not the case.

The mass-shooting-a-day statistics are based on a very expansive definition of mass shooting, such as three or more victims (not necessarily fatalities). Moreover, they lump together a very heterogeneous collection of episodes, which differ materially from the mass shooting events like those that have occurred in San Bernardino and Colorado Springs. For instance, they include gang drive by shootings or the likely gang-related shooting at a park in New Orleans 3 weeks ago. They also include a brawls at biker bars and other such criminal mayhem involving more than two people.

The one-size-fits-all term “mass shooting” doesn’t fit such varied phenomena, and one-size-fits-all-policies are unlikely to work either. Indeed, even the most deadly mass shootings that get the most attention, are highly idiosyncratic. Newtown is very different from Colorado Springs is very different from San Bernardino is very different from Charleston is different from Fort Hood in terms of the perpetrators, methods, and targets.

Contrary *The Economist’s* risible claim that “such atrocities are still drastically underreported,” the attention that they get may arguably overstates their importance. The Newtown-type attacks kill about as many Americans in a year as the average daily homicide toll. The United States does have a high murder rate (both gun and non-gun) compared to other high-income nations, although the rate has about halved in the last two decades.

Furthermore, murder, including murder with firearms, is not uniformly distributed across the US. To the contrary, it is highly concentrated geographically, and demographically. The statistics are quite shocking.

About 75 percent of murders occur in 3 percent of the counties in the US. Demographically, the concentration is even more pronounced. It is not exclusively, but overwhelmingly, a young, black, male phenomenon. The white murder rate is about 2.5 per 100,000. That's roughly double of European rates, but not nearly as anomalous as the US rate overall. Indeed, white murder rates outside the South and Southwest are pretty much the same as European rates.

The truly horrific rates are among young black urban males, with especially high rates in Southern cities. Whereas the US firearms homicide rate is about 4/100,000, among African American men 20-24, it is almost 90. Yes: more than 22 times higher. Even black women in that age cohort have a high rate, 7 per 100,000, or about 5 times the white female murder rate.

In sum, gun laws are fairly uniform across the United States, and gun ownership is widespread, but gun murder is not: if anything gun laws are most restrictive in places where gun crime is most rampant. Therefore, relatively easy access to guns is not sufficient to explain America's elevated (compared to other OECD countries) murder rate. The regional and demographic variation shows that cultural and socioeconomic factors are important drivers. (The fact that non-firearm murder rates in the US are high compared to other countries, and also exhibit similar geographic and demographic variations reinforces this point.) Again contrary to *The Economist*, it is not true that "the link between guns and gun violence" is obvious. There are a lot of guns where there's not a lot of violence. Guns don't exercise a malign mesmeric effect on anyone who touches them. There is a mixture of social and cultural factors and guns that produce violence.

This tends to undercut the proposition that increasing restrictions on gun ownership will have much of an impact on murder rates. That said, even if other factors drive murder rates, greater restrictions on guns could still be beneficial: guns are complements to these other factors in the production of violence, including mortal violence, and the taxation of complements can be a way of reducing the frequency and severity of bad conduct produced using them.

But it is highly doubtful whether any remotely politically possible law—that is a law that would not have large effects on the hundred million-plus law-abiding gun owners in America, many of whom are very politically active—will have a meaningful impact on the pathologies that inflict many communities in the US.

In brief, it is evident that those who commit crimes with guns are highly inelastic demanders. Most of the high-murder rate localities already have draconian gun control laws, which include substantial penalties for violations. Furthermore, those most likely to kill (and be killed) with firearms are engaged in illegal conduct (e.g., drug dealing) that is subject to severe legal sanctions, and believe that guns are necessary for them to engage in this conduct. Thus, those most likely to kill with a firearm possess them despite the fact that they incur a large cost to do so. Further restrictions are unlikely to induce them to adjust on either the intensive or extensive margin (e.g., by changing "careers"), because they will lead to only small increases in the cost they incur to possess and use weapons. *

(Those bent on mass mayhem, be they terrorists, or psychotics, or narcissists looking for fame, or racist losers looking to spark a race war, are also likely to be inelastic demanders. These acts are the productive of obsessions that will drive those in their grip to go to great lengths to circumvent any attempt to prevent them.)

And we know prohibitionism doesn't work. It didn't work with alcohol in the 20s and 30s. It hasn't worked with narcotics for decades. It doesn't work with guns now, even [in places like France](#), where terrorists clearly have had no problem obtaining deadly arsenals. (Take a look at reports

of how many guns French and Belgian police seized in raids in the days after Friday, November 13.) The world is awash in guns. Guns that are quite functional for criminals are quite easy to manufacture. (Anybody remember the days when “Saturday Night Specials,” not Glocks or AKs were the bane of society—back when murder rates were far higher, by the way?) Those who think that passing laws against guns, including outright bans, will keep them out of the hands of those most likely to commit crimes with them—including mass murder—has their eyes closed to reality.

It is also ironic that many of those who are most vocal in calling for draconian restrictions on guns are also loudest in their condemnations of how the burdens of drug prohibitionism fall most heavily on minorities, who are imprisoned at high rates for drug crimes. Whom, pray tell, do they expect will be most frequently imprisoned for gun possession or trafficking, given that the same demographic is responsible for a greatly disproportionate fraction of gun crimes?

It should also be noted that minority communities are not enthusiastic about gun control, and for understandable reasons. Gun laws in cities like Chicago and DC are (a) almost wholly ineffective in curbing gun crime, and (b) render law-abiding people, mainly minority, defenseless against the (illegally) armed predators that live among them.

Americans recognize all this for the most part. Even though Obama and Hillary and others on the left furiously attempt to exploit any mass slaying to advance the gun control agenda, a solid (and growing) majority of Americans disagree. Indeed, they tend to vote with their wallets: a mass shooting, and political posturing about gun control, is followed by a spike in gun sales as surely as day follows night. Some wags have suggested that Obama must own shares in Ruger and Smith & Wesson, because he is so good for business.

The gun debate has become repetitive and sterile, more of a political Punch & Judy show than a constructive conversation. It is particularly appalling that innocent victims are seldom no more than political props in these debates.

Gun murders, which range from crimes of passion to political terrorism, are too diverse and complex to be addressed with simplistic, one-size-fits-all solutions. Prohibitionism, or draconian restrictions that approach prohibition—to the law abiding—despite (or is it because of?) its popularity on the left, is particularly counterproductive.

Murder, including murder by firearms, has declined substantially in the past 20 years. We should be grateful for that, and focus on ways to extend that decline: revising drug laws and punishments is likely to be a more productive way to do this than revising gun laws. But progress will at best be incremental. And the most difficult area to make progress will be mass shootings, given the extreme motivation of the perpetrators, and the diversity of their motives.

* This is related to the “Mickey Mouse Monopoly” effect that Walter Oi wrote about years ago. Oi noted that the demand for tickets to Disneyland was highly inelastic because the ticket itself contributed a relatively modest amount to the total cost of going to Disneyland. For everyone but locals, trip to the park required extensive travel (e.g., a plane trip or long car trip), lodging for several nights, dining out, etc. If the price of a ticket represented say 10 percent of the total cost of the trip, doubling the cost of a ticket only increased the cost of the entire trip by 10 percent. This made the demand for tickets inelastic. If the demand for a visit to Disneyland had an elasticity of 1, the demand for tickets had an elasticity equal to 1 times the share of a trip represented by the ticket. So if that share was 10 percent, the elasticity for tickets was only .1, meaning that Disney could raise ticket prices substantially without reducing the number of visitors much at all.

National Review

On Guns, Californians Practice 'Irish Democracy' and Ignore Bone-Headed Laws

Hell-raising is fine — for a time.

by Kevin D. Williamson

It isn't even St. Patrick's Day, but we are all Irish now: In Connecticut, the boneheaded state government passed a law demanding the registration of certain firearms, and the people of Connecticut, perhaps communing for a moment with their independent-minded Yankee forebears, mainly refused to comply. On the other side of the country in the heart of California's technology corridor, the city of Sunnyvale demanded that residents hand over all firearms capable of accepting magazines holding more than ten rounds — effectively, everything except revolvers and some single-shot rifles — and the good men and women of Silicon Valley responded by turning in a grand total of zero firearms. Similar initiatives in other jurisdictions have produced similar results.

Political scientists call this "Irish democracy," the phenomenon by which the general members of a polity resist the mandates of their would-be rulers by simply refusing to comply with them. It is a low-cost form of civil disobedience, but one that can be very effective at times: Mohandas K. Gandhi was entirely correct in his famous declaration to the British powers that they would eventually be forced to simply pack up their tiffin pails and go home, because 300,000 Englishmen could not control 300 million (at the time) Indians if those Indians didn't cooperate.

One way of considering the radical potential of simple noncompliance is the "10 percent synchronous subversion factor," the proposition that if 10 percent of the U.S. population refused to (for instance) pay taxes or answer jury-duty summonses, then the rules would have to change, because they would be unenforceable: There aren't enough tax agents, constables, slots on court dockets, or jail cells to enforce the rules against 32 million Americans if they should decide to refuse to comply with a given law.

The prospect of the local-yokel police in Sunnyvale, Calif., going door to door, Fallujah-style, trying to collect nonconforming firearms is humorous to contemplate; contemplating the same sort of development in Texas or Wyoming is rather less amusing, because at that point the model of resistance would stop being Irish democracy and almost certainly would mutate into something a lot more like Lexington and Concord. No decent, patriotic person wants to see that.

Nor does one relish the idea of police forces being obliged to choose between attempting to enforce an illegal and unconstitutional order and ceding the interpretation of constitutional law to mob-ocracy. Even for those of us who understand why the Second Amendment exists and who endorse the reasoning behind it, trusting in the prudence of large, armed crowds of 21st-century Americans requires an act of faith well in excess of the evidence.

The hallmark episode of Irish democracy in the American setting is Prohibition, which is a cautionary tale — and not only for the would-be modern prohibitionist. Prohibition demonstrated several things to the American public, which took the lesson to heart: Politicians are entirely capable of making stupid laws when in the grips of voguish thinking; the American people are more than capable of ignoring and subverting those laws; that subversion often is met with

ruthlessness and brutality on the part of law enforcement, but enforcement is by no means even-handed; hypocrisy, like alcohol, is a useful social lubricant in moderation but debilitating in excess; social tensions reveal who has political power and who doesn't, casting a harsh bright light on Lenin's fundamental question — "Who? Whom?"; and law enforcement is just as corruptible as any other institution. Prohibition did a lot of damage by providing an enduring model of organized crime, but it also undermined Americans' faith in the rule of law as such: Favoritism in enforcement, bribery, and institutional incapacity severely damaged the law's prestige. We have never really quite recovered.

Our new prohibitionists are a lot like the old ones. The nice corduroy-clad liberals in places such as Georgetown and the Upper West Side use guns as a stand-in for the sort of people who own guns in much the same way as the old WASP prohibitionists used booze as a stand-in for the sort of people who drank too much: Irish and other Catholics, especially immigrants, and especially especially poor immigrants. The horror at "gun culture" is about the *culture* — rural, conservative, traditionalist, patriotic, self-reliant or at least aspiring to self-reliance — much more than it is about the guns. It's the same sort of dynamic that gets people worked up about Confederate flags or poor white people with diabetes who shop at Walmart.

A little dose of Irish democracy is an excellent thing in response to that, especially when it is coming from California and Connecticut rather than Oklahoma and Alabama. But winning the fight on gun rights while losing the fight on the rule of law is the very definition of a Pyrrhic victory. It is necessary that we also prevail politically and legally, which we have been, thanks in no small part to the efforts of the NRA and affiliated groups, as well as the increasingly sensible view of the American public that what's wrong with mass shooters has more to do with the mental-health system — and that what's wrong with Chicago has something to do with that, too, inasmuch as the inmates are running that particular asylum.

The Supreme Court has been more than clear, on more than one occasion, that the Second Amendment says what it means and means what it says. We also have a long legal and constitutional tradition that prohibits stripping people of their civil rights — including their Second Amendment rights — without due process, generally in the form of an indictment and a trial and a conviction. If the Democrats want to do away with the Second Amendment, let them begin the amendment process and see how far they get. We should challenge them to do so at every opportunity.

In reality, the Democrats have declared war on the First Amendment, voting in the Senate to repeal it; they have declared war on the Second Amendment at every turn; they also have declared war on due process and, in doing so, on the idea of the rule of law itself, beginning with the notion of "innocent until proven guilty." That isn't liberalism — it's totalitarianism.

That's a winnable fight, and we should welcome it.

No Pasaran

[T'is easy to tout the success of gun control laws in the rest of the Western world when you ignore certain pertinent facts from Europe](#)

Today, the [International New York Times](#) published my response to the Gray Lady's front-page

editorial, [End the Gun Epidemic in America](#). (Are there any readers in the Big Apple who can confirm whether it was published in the domestic version of the newspaper?)

It is easy to tout the success of gun control laws in the rest of the Western world and to say that "this just doesn't happen in other countries" when you ignore : the 1996 massacre of 16 children at a Scottish primary school; the 2000 killing of eight kids in Japan; the 2002 deaths of eight people in Nanterre, France; the 2002 killing of 16 kids in Erfurt, Germany; the 2007 shootings to death of eight people in Tuusula, Finland; the killing of 10 people at a Finnish university less than a year later; the 2009 killing of 15 people in Winnenden, Germany; and, needless to say, Anders Breivik's 2011 mass murder of 77 Norwegians, most of them teenagers.

Is it unrealistic to wonder whether the tolls would have been lesser had a few of the adults in each place — as well as in Paris's Bataclan a couple of weeks ago — carried a weapon and tried to shoot back at the respective killers?

FYI, that couple of sentences is a tiny [outtake](#) from [my in-depth \(and dispassionate\) study on the issue of gun control](#). (Thanks to Glenn Reynolds for [the Instapundit link](#).)

IBD

[Late Night Humor](#)

by Andrew Malcolm

Fallon: Sting will perform at a fundraiser for Hillary Clinton this month. Hillary says she's been a huge Sting fan ever since he agreed to perform at her fundraiser.

Fallon: Mark Zuckerberg is taking two months' paternity leave now that his first child is born. That marks the first time anyone's had a baby and tried to *avoid* Facebook.

Meyers: President Obama met Hillary Clinton this week for a secret White House lunch. When lunch ended, Hillary said, "OK, thanks for coming over."

Conan: Kim Kardashian waited several days to reveal her new baby's name, Saint. Asked why the delay, Kim said, "We're very private people."

Meyers: A new study finds specially-trained pigeons have an 85% accuracy detecting breast cancer in humans. Which means that 15% of the time it's just a pigeon staring at your boobs.

Fallon: The Philadelphia 76ers set a new record for the longest losing streak in American sports history, with 28 losses in a row since last season. You know the 76ers are bad when *they* leave the game early to beat traffic.

Fallon: Kobe Bryant says he's quitting professional basketball. That's right. He's signing with the Philadelphia 76ers.

Fallon: Russia is planning to build a base on the Moon for astronauts to live permanently. When asked if they really want to spend the rest of their lives on a barren, lifeless landscape, the Russians said, "No, that's why we want to go to the Moon."

Conan: Pope Francis is calling for an audit of all the Catholic Church's wealth. In a related story, Pope Francis is missing.

Conan: McDonald's is testing a new service in California where employees serve customers at their tables. They're calling this service "Applebee's."

Meyers: Former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger says he'll become a "part-time vegetarian" to cut down his carbon footprint. If you're wondering what a part-time vegetarian is, it's someone who eats meat.

Meyers: Apple has unveiled a new case for the iPhone 6 and iPhone 6S. It costs \$100 and can provide the phone with as much as 25 hours of additional battery life. Which raises the total amount of battery life to 25.5 hours.

Meyers: Pundits predict if Hillary Clinton wins the New Hampshire Democratic primary, it'll be the end to Bernie Sanders' candidacy. But Bernie's hoping he still has a shot in Old Hampshire.

The Donald Trump Section:

Conan: Donald Trump has cancelled a trip to Israel. Asked why, Trump said, "They already have a wall and a fear of Muslims. My work there is done."

Fallon: The Victoria's Secret Fashion Show was on CBS this week. It featured models from Brazil, Sweden and Portugal. Trump said, "I've changed my mind on immigrants."

Fallon: Republicans now think Trump is their party's best shot to win the general election. Interesting because Democrats also think Trump is their party's best shot at winning the general election.

Meyers: That's right, Trump said the United States should block all Muslims from entering the country. He said that, in fact, the only reason we should ever allow anyone to come here from any country is to marry him.

Conan: At a production of "A Christmas Carol" Donald Trump was heard yelling, "Walk it off, Tiny Tim!"

Fallon: A man dressed as Santa Claus outside Macy's is charging kids \$5 for a photo. Asked why he's doing it, Trump said, "These children are terrible negotiators!"

Conan: Trump is under fire for mocking a reporter with disabilities. Trump said, "Don't worry, I'll soon do something far worse and this will all be forgotten."

WE MUST BAN
ALL ASSAULT WEAPONS
BECAUSE FEDERAL
BACKGROUND CHECKS
SIMPLY DON'T WORK

DON'T WORRY ABOUT
100,000 MUSLIM REFUGEES
THEY'RE ALL GETTING
FEDERAL
BACKGROUND CHECKS



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and SUDDENLY, the PRESIDENT REALIZED that **ISIS** WAS THE **THREAT**...

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OBAMA'S GOING TO
PARIS TO MEET WITH
WORLD LEADERS.

Uh, Oh.



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...ABOUT
CLIMATE CHANGE.



Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha!!

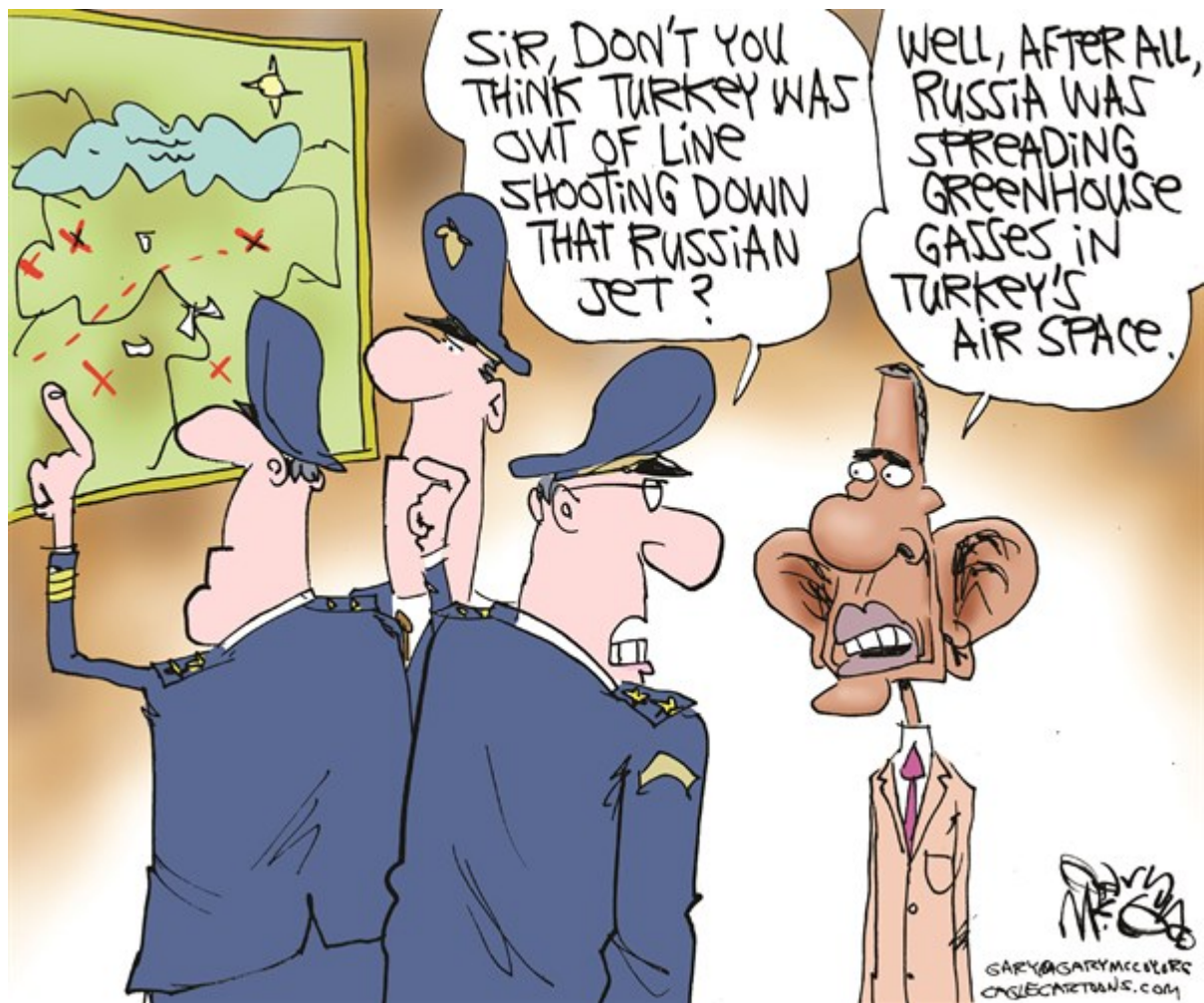


RAMIREZ the WEEKLY STANDARD
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The THREAT

The POWERFUL REBUKE





SIR, DON'T YOU
THINK TURKEY WAS
OUT OF LINE
SHOOTING DOWN
THAT RUSSIAN
JET ?

WELL, AFTER ALL,
RUSSIA WAS
SPREADING
GREENHOUSE
GASSES IN
TURKEY'S
AIR SPACE.

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